

**ABSTRACT**

The invention relates to methods and compositions that inhibit viral replication, *e.g.*, CMV replication, within a host or host cell. Methods and compositions of the invention utilize RNA interference to block the translation of mRNA into proteins  
5 which are important or essential to viral replication. The method and compositions can be used to study CMV infection in *in vitro* cell culture and to treat CMV infection in non-human primates and human subjects.